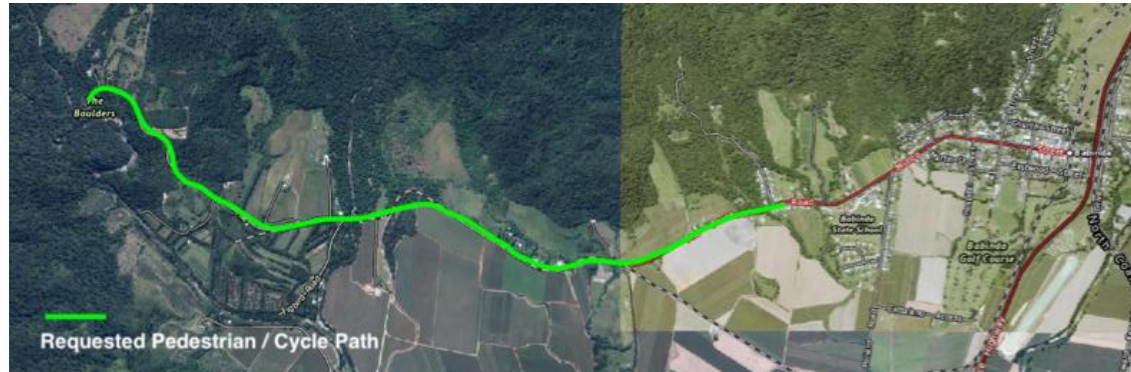


PETITION TO CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

For a Bike and Pedestrian Path that connects the township of Babinda with the Babinda Boulders Recreational Area – *the Babinda to Boulders Bike and Pedestrian Path (BBBPP).*

What?

We ask Council to provide an appropriately constructed Pedestrian / Cycle Path from the end of the existing concrete pedestrian path on Boulders Road to the Babinda Boulders, a distance of 4.6km (approx.).



Why?

- Improved community access to an important regional and local recreational asset.
- Improved safety for all road users – including those presently walking / cycling to the Boulders.
- Improved access to the Goldfield Trail (allow for bus / trip to Babinda township rather than access to the Boulders at one end). Options for increased visitation for multi-day walking purposes.
- Improved tourism and visitor experience for Babinda and for the Boulders. This project could create opportunities for Nature Based Tourism experiences, alternate Accommodation options, and improved patronage for existing business in Babinda.
- Improved health and wellbeing to community – walking and cycling improve physical and mental wellbeing.

For further detail – Kristy Gilvear
PO Box 228
BABINDA QLD 4861

Phone – 0448 897 991

PETITION TO CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

ATTACHMENT

FURTHER DETAIL

- Path construction could be a mix of concrete, bitumen seal, compact gravel, culverts and / or small-scale bridge structures.
- The path could be planned and delivered in stages, commencing at the Boulders (western end of the proposed alignment) which provides a benefit in terms of visitor access to telephone reception (which is not presently available at the Boulders recreational reserve).
- It is expected that with suitable design, the Path should be able to be accommodated in the Boulders Road reserve.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- The Adventure and Active Tourism Market is increasing.
- Far North Queensland naturally competes with locations offering several active experiences, including Tasmania, Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, Western Australia and the like.
- The Babinda locality is home to the highest and second highest mountains in Queensland. Summiting the highest peak – Mt Bartle Frere – and a secondary peak on that mountain, is possible via an established track accessed at Josephine Falls.
- The Babinda locality is home to a significant number of swimming holes and 'safe' swimming options, including the Babinda Boulders and Josephine Falls. Whilst both sites have had several accidents and incidents, they present in the main a safe option for swimmers and visitors wishing to experience tropical freshwater environments.
- The Goldfield Trail is a historic track, home to a large Gold Stamper and an overnight hiking opportunity. The Trail is well worn but arguably available for higher rates of well managed visitation. It is suitable for both walkers and cyclists and accordingly, *offers a natural continuation for adventure tourists that have walked or cycled the Babinda to Boulders Bike and Pedestrian Path.*
- Employment in the Babinda township predominantly relates to service industries, commercial and retail offerings, Babinda Springs water bottling plant and the agriculture sector. Tourism in a conventional sense is not a dominant employer. Additional options to leverage from significant natural assets in the area, including the Babinda Boulders, will improve the potential for tourism to broaden in the locality, providing more diversity in employment and income opportunities.

For further detail – Kristy Gilvear
PO Box 228
BABINDA QLD 4861

Phone – 0448 897 991

PETITION TO CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

POLICY ALIGNMENT

The requested Pedestrian / Cycle Path aligns with several Council Policies and Strategic Priorities including:

Cairns 2050: Shared Vision

A number of specific, significant projects or enablers are identified within the Shared Vision; the subject of this Petition, whilst not listed, aligns with Strategic Themes within the Shared Vision including:

- *Tourism - focused on growing, diversifying and promoting the tourism offer*
- *Community Wellbeing - focused on delivering high quality community infrastructure, employment and improved connectivity to enhance the wellbeing of residents and visitors*
- *Enabling Policy & Infrastructure – focused on developing the infrastructure and policy required to support Cairns’ strategic direction*

Covid 19 Cairns Local Recovery Plan

The Plan includes, within Objective 1 of the Action Plan the following task:

“Support the creation of new experiences and infrastructure that drive the region’s competitive advantages... including:

...

New leisure infrastructure including [a number of predominantly northern trails and experiences] and expansion of mountain biking trails.”

The proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Path, whilst not significant when compared to the proposed Wangetti Trail or even the Tablelands Rail Trail project, is considered likely to have a positive impact on residents and business opportunity in the Babinda locality. The township and the locality more broadly would benefit from a connection to the Babinda Boulders for alternate access, to further capitalise on its unique and stunning characteristics from a locational perspective.

There are limited accommodation (short term / tourism) available in town; visitor experience when travelling from Cairns typically involves a journey to the Boulders, with minimal (if any) interaction or engagement with the town proper. Self-drive and self-contained tourists have fantastic options to connect with the township via the Rotary Park on Babinda Creek, but there is no connection between this park and town in a formal sense. There is no pedestrian footpath.

For further detail – Kristy Gilvear
PO Box 228
BABINDA QLD 4861

Phone – 0448 897 991

PETITION TO CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

There is no connection – other than vehicular – between the Boulders reserve and Babinda township.

There are no projects in terms of pedestrian / cycle activities listed in the Plan for the southern suburbs, where a large proportion of Cairns population resides.

Corporate Plan 2021-2026

Focus One – Robust Economy

Optimise visitation and tourism opportunities

KPI's include *Growth in visitation and yield* and *Diversification and growth in the economy*

The proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Path will improve visitor experience and potential opportunities for Babinda and the broader region to capitalise on the Boulders tourism experience, accessing an element of the market (cycle and walking tourism) not directly catered for in this way presently.

Focus Three – Design for Liveability

Deliver valued suburban community infrastructure

KPI's include *Improved connectivity of cycleways and footpaths*

The proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Path will allow for a connection for the community and broader visitors to Babinda and the Boulders. The Boulders is improved with a pedestrian pathway to the viewing platforms at and below Devils Pool, and the Goldfields Trail through to Goldsborough. Connecting the township with these networks will assist in improving connections and accessing the areas in a manner not car related.

Focus Four – Community & Culture

Provide spaces and programs for the wellbeing of the community

KPI's include *Increased visitation to and activation of Council's venues*

The proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Path will allow for alternate access to and from the Boulders which is a Council Reserve, and managed facility.

Parks and Leisure Strategic Plan and Public Open Space General Policy (December 2021)

Section 3.2.2 – Desired public open space outcomes for ... rural areas (villages and small townships)

For further detail – Kristy Gilvear
PO Box 228
BABINDA QLD 4861

Phone – 0448 897 991

PETITION TO CAIRNS REGIONAL COUNCIL

The following outcomes are desirable....

....

4. *City-wide or regional level opportunities are provided for the Community as precinct or recreation destinations at locations that maximise access and are within 10 minutes safe walking or cycling from main transport routes and public transport interchanges.*

....

9. *Public parks within rural towns and villages should be complemented by a walk and ride pathway network which adds value to the accessibility of parks and contributes to the diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities available to a community.*

...

The Pedestrian / Cycle Path connecting Babinda to the Boulders recreation area has the potential to enhance visitor experiences in terms of the Boulders as a recreation precinct. Providing an option to cycle to this destination rather than needing to access via motor vehicle predominantly will improve accessibility, and add to the value of the Boulders and to the Babinda township via improved diversity in outdoor recreation opportunity available.

Section 5 – Implementation

4. Catchment Based Management Planning (CBMP)

The preparation of more detailed planning at district or catchment level allows for ... reviewing the existing network and identifying opportunities to improve the efficiency of the existing infrastructure.

The proposed Pedestrian / Cycle Path connecting the Babinda township with the Boulders could appropriately be incorporated into a detailed Plan for the Babinda District, improving efficiency in both township based infrastructure (footpaths and support infrastructure including the Bill Wakeham Park and commercial area) and the Boulders infrastructure, via providing a formalised, safe and viable access alternative to enjoy the area.

For further detail – Kristy Gilvear
PO Box 228
BABINDA QLD 4861

Phone – 0448 897 991